Herskovits & Herskovits E-6 (1929-1929) 1934
SR3 Bush Negroes SR3
Saramacca

him. He has taken boats up and down the Marowyne. He is my grandson. If I had one of my own blood, I would have had him accompany you. . . . But my sisters' children sleep," he ended, using the euphemism for death.

When we came to know the young man, we asked him about this incident with the Granman. Was he not afraid to interrupt him?

"Ma kye! But he is my grandfather! With my grandfather I make sport."

Again we went to the old men and sought in village after village for their own explanation of this behavior toward grandparents.

There were, we learned, age distinctions that were deeply felt. A man was on easy terms with those of his own generation. Between parents and children, and those of the generation of their parents, however, there was a definite code of behavior. For example, no young man or woman might talk of sexual matters with either parent, and this lack of sanction for frankness in sexual discussions with parents became an actual taboo with parents-in-law. Encounters with the "pai" and "mai," as they were known, were hemmed in by countless prohibitions. A man might not sleep in the same house with either of them, nor might he eat with them out of the same dish. If he met either of his parents-in-law as he went along the path, he had to turn aside, make way for them, and cover his face. He might not pronounce their names, nor might they speak his. These observances held for women, too, and the ones we mention were by no means all.

With grandparents, however, a vastly different situation obtained.

"He is my grandson. I call him mati—friend. I make sport with him!"

"She is my granddaughter. She calls me husband. She makes free with me!"

"She is my granddaughter, we talk about everything. She calls me kambo, and I call her kambo." Again, we

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner
Saramaccaner
Boni

619 In general appearance and culture the Aucaners vary little
184 from the other large tribe, the Saramaccaners.

[531] The art motifs and their treatment as displayed on the Aucaner wood carvings as a rule differ from those of the Saramaccaners. On the other hand, some of the pieces were found to be practically identical.

The Aucaner talkee-talkee also differs from that of the Saramaccaners, the former being more like the speech of the
[NZ Town Negroes. The Aucaners have no deepee-talkee or odo
198 as have the Saramaccaners, but they have a dialect known as
191] *Koropina* where a *p* or an *m* is spoken before the vowels in a word for the purpose of confusing strangers. A similar custom is prevalent among the Negroes of Curaçao, Dutch West Indies.

[291] The dress of the Aucaners is the same as that of the Saramaccaners, excepting that they affect more often the breast-cloth, the *wassapangye,* and the head-cloth, the *mussu.*

Among the Aucaners the toga garment is called the *yembah,* while it is called a camissa by the Saramaccaners. The barrier of palm leaves is called *chifunga* by the Aucaners and *azang pau* by the Saramaccaners.

[262 The system of food taboos and general culture are the
606] same. There is no mother-in-law taboo among either the
194 Aucaners or the Saramaccaner tribe.

[161] The Boni tribe, which consists of about 900 people, is de-
648 scended from escaped slaves who crossed the Marowyne River into French Guiana and who were allowed to remain there unmolested by the French authorities. This is the only

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

tradition and authority. The older women's opinions bear 835
considerable weight, for it is chiefly they who maintain the
customs of the tribe. The mother-in-law and father-in-law [766]
are held in special esteem.

Unlike divorce, death is an occasion of genuine sorrow. 765
If a man's wife dies, he may go into mourning for a whole
year. His mourning consists in staying in his hut and doing
no work, while his dead wife's family brings him food and
supports him. When the year is up, he makes a sacrifice to
"the little ground god, Amu" before taking another woman. [776
He slaughters a fowl, letting the blood flow from the throat 782]
on to the earth. After this ritual sacrifice a big dance is held,
and he is permitted to marry again. It is his next wife who
insists upon this ritual.

When a man dies, it is sometimes incumbent upon his 587
widow to have intercourse with his oldest surviving brother
and marry him. The fact that he may already be married
makes no difference whatever. It is imperative that they live
together for several months; after that, if there is no affec-
tion between them, they can separate. This is a widespread
custom among primitives, and there are remnants of it in
the present-day customs of orthodox Jews.

Among the Aucaners it is not necessary for a man to have
intercourse with his deceased brother's wife. He must, how-
ever, take care of her for a period of six months, after which
time she is free to remarry.

A woman may publicly mourn her deceased husband by [765]
singing a dirge every little while.

606 /152 cont./
Relations between husband and mother-in-law. As is commonly observed in Africa, the husband has the duty to respect his mother-in-law, to have a reserved attitude toward her. /153/ A curious custom exists on this subject among the Refugee Blacks: If he inadvertently arrives at the village wharf at the moment when she is bathing, he must pay her compensation in the form of a camisa. This is a reciprocal obligation.

[513] He may sleep under the same roof as she when the village is crowded, but not habitually.

606 609 On the other hand, the custom of the Refugee Blacks differs sharply from African customs on one important point: it does not call for any material obligation toward the mother-in-law or the wife's brothers. The husband is not at all required to give them presents or to contribute toward their maintenance. In fact, the wife gives her mother part of what her husband gives her.

684 Adultery. The custom of the Refugee Blacks concerning adultery is extremely curious. The outraged husband has the right to inflict a public punishment on the lover, which he must stand without defending himself. In the absence of the husband his brother is qualified to strike in his place. This punishment must take place in a village in the presence of witnesses capable of intervening if the punishment goes beyond accepted limits.

Only bare fists may be used.

A man can always escape too brutal a punishment by taking refuge in the water. His adversary may not follow him into it under pain of a severe punishment by the grand man. He can also take refuge in the bush.

[692] The husband's honor being thus publicly restored, the row is over; in such cases some men are seen to beat the wife in addition, but this is not the general case; the true custom does not call for the wife to be beaten because she is considered irresponsible. She can either be repudiated or threatened

/179 cont./

765 [769] [778] [613] After three months, an offering is made at the fraga tiki of the dead person's lineage, setting forth how much her spouse has respected her memory and asking permission to lighten the manifestations of his sorrow. The mourning is then lightened, but the man in mourning continues to wear a bandeau around his head or at the very least an old beret.

765 461 [613] During the first months the man in mourning has no other responsibility than to hunt and fish at the order of the dead woman's lineage. He does his own cooking with the food given to him; he cuts a clearing for his mother-in-law or another woman of the deceased's relatives, who will farm it with him.

[431] Next, he receives the order to go and earn the money necessary for the sizable contribution he must bring to the festival of the lifting of mourning. During the entire duration of the mourning he must report on his work and moves.

765 [606] When the end of mourning approaches, he must do a job for the benefit of his mother-in-law, generally redoing the roof of her house or building a boat for her.

[626] These arrangements do not involve any material sanction whatever. Like the rest of the social life of the Refugee Blacks, they rest entirely upon fear of a suprahuman sanction.

[589] After the lifting of mourning, the person in mourning may remarry without further delay.

765 768 [562] State of widows and co-wives of a widower. The state of a woman in mourning is practically identical to that of a widower. She lives for the duration of mourning in her deceased husband's house under the surveillance of his near relatives on the maternal side.

[613] [439] The dead man's lineage lends her all the objects she needs and furnishes the imported commodities (salt, kerosene, soap) that she uses. On the other hand, she may freely use the produce of the clearing that her husband had cut for her, since it is taken for granted that these products are the exclusive property of the wife.

/179 cont./

765 431 [606] Before coming out of mourning, the widow must procure for herself at the minimum the money necessary for a demijohn of tafia as a contribution to the festival of the lifting of mourning. She must make a present of several cans of couac to her husband's mother.

765 843 184 A pregnant woman undergoes mourning exactly according to the general law. The custom described by several authors for the Saramaka, according to which the pregnant woman must join one of her husband's "brothers," does not apply to the Boni.

765 888 There are some attenuations of the harshness of mourning with respect to old women. For example in 1956, Lémiki (70 years), living in Boniville, was in mourning for her husband Tabiki (Awara Bakka, but residing since childhood with the Lapé lineage in Loka /180/ where he had been raised by his [768] [602] father). Lémiki alternately spent three weeks in her house and three in her husband's. It was Asamani, Tabiki's sister by the same father, who exercised authority over her.

765 768 [613] This remarkable example shows that as regards mourning (rights and duties), the principle of residence plays an essential role. He who has been reared by his father is in this respect taken out of his lineage, which loses all rights and all control over the conduct of the mourning.

765 [775] The co-wives of a widower are subject to mourning on the same grounds as he, and for the same motive, since they are targets for the jealousy of the dead woman's yɔrka.

[768] However, they are authorized most often to live with their maternal family. When the period of dipi baaka has ended, 765 833 they may take up conjugal relations again with their husband, but at intervals of several weeks and without his being able to spend the night with one of them. Each time he must ask permission of the head of the dead woman's lineage. [613]